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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY India

SUBJECT Conditions near Tibetan Border
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1. Dharchule, [29° 51'N 80° 32'E] the site of [redacted] station, is a nine days' journey from Almora on foot. Since no cart can go beyond Almora, women and children are carried to Dharchule in chairs. When I entered this area, I took my radio with me. It caused much curiosity and the few people who could afford radios also got them. These people follow closely the Indian war news. The US could be a strong influence here, but the people feel that if the US can be reached around by Communist China, they had better be careful themselves for fear the Chinese may try to come into India. The border of India and Tibet is not finely defined everywhere, and in this area it is established only by custom. The Communists claim territory up to the "inner line" and the Indians fear a campaign to take it.
2. This area is populated mostly by Bhotenese, who do considerable trading with the Tibetians. Southwest Tibet is poor agricultural land and the Bhotense trade rice, wheat, barley and some corn for borax, salt and wool. The border is open (though I have not tried to cross it myself) and traders are fairly free to cross, though local permits are required. Many Tibetians enter- beggars, traders and shepherds--for commercial fairs. At this point the border is marked on the Indian side with a footpath about four feet wide cut out of the mountain and maintained to some extent by the government. I have seen no military forces, but check posts are maintained by Indian CID border patrols of highly trained, fairly well educated men who, I believe, are above bribe. The United Provinces government is very strict and a member of the police or border patrol is not likely to have any known Communist tendency. Should he be found even with a Communist newspaper in his possession, he would be subject to dismissal.
3. I have seen no Communist literature in this area; however, there is a radical (though I believe not Communist) paper in Almora which is against all Christian [redacted] and is capable of stirring up the people against us.

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- 2 -

4. During the first year of Communist rule of Tibet, the Bhotenese traders were glowing in their praise of the new regime. During the past year, however, they have begun to change their minds. Until the Communists took over Tibet, trading policies were more or less set by India in favor of the Indians. Now, under Communism, trade regulations favor the Tibetans, and the Bhotenese do not like some of the tendencies. With this dislike of methods, they have come to dislike Communism, with no understanding whatsoever of the real Communist theory.

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5. Medical facilities are scarce in this area. [redacted] dispensaries at Dharchula, at Balboko (10 miles south of Dharchula) and a 6-months dispensary at Sirkha. There are government dispensaries at Askot (where there is a doctor with a bachelor's degree) at Likhtar and at Sanicoodair, but the people depend more upon [redacted] dispensaries. Most local dispensaries have registered nurses but no doctors. A government district hospital located at Almora has 50 beds, Indian style. There is an X-ray machine there but the local people do not know how to use it. One of the finest hospitals in northern India is the Methodist hospital in Bareilly with its nurses school and dental college. Mussoorie has a big mission hospital where officials from the American Embassy frequently go for treatment. US antibiotics are available on the open market without prescriptions as required in the US.

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